

[on steps of Old Courthouse, St. Louis, Missouri]

*National Park Ranger:* You know, 150 years ago, slavery was allowed here in Missouri by our laws. And the terrible thing about it was that every day on this main street it was shown by auctions at different places around downtown, and even here at the courthouse, a temple of justice, slaves were sold by order of the court. Today, as part of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Civil War, this first event, we want to try to put a face, blood, bones, and flesh on some of those names. The Civil War was fought in large part to settle the issue of slavery. You know, Abraham Lincoln said, "A nation can't exist half slave and half free." This event is not being held in the spirit of degrading people or as a spectacle but rather as a piece of our history, a piece of the history that we may rather forget, but nevertheless we must remember.

*Auctioneer:* We got two lots of slaves we're going to sell today. The first is a lot of four. These are not part of the Charbonneau estate. The second lot we're going to sell is eight slaves as a part of the Charbonneau estate, to settle this out of probate. These first four slaves we're selling are as you see them, so come on take a look at 'em, look what you find, look 'em over good, they will be not sold with any type of warranty whatsoever. The eight slaves, they come from the Charbonneau estate. All these slaves have been acclimated, they're excellent subjects, they've been with the mistress for many years, and therefore they're going to be severally warranted against any vices or maladies according to the state of Missouri. The terms today is half cash down, the second half would be on a secured bank note of six months with a special mortgage on the slaves until the debt is paid in full. All acts of the sale today are going to be recorded by the notary public of the probate court and all those expenses will go to the buyer. If you have any questions of the terms of this sale, you can address them to the clerk and the notary that's located inside the courthouse.

*Auctioneer:* So, take a good look at 'em now 'cause we're gonna sell 'em, that's how we're gonna do it. The first lot we're going to sell is these four. Make your bids, make sure I see you now, I want to see you and I'm going to make sure I get your bids. These first four here we're going to sell here,

[cries of slaves on the auction block]

*Auctioneer:* we got a blacksmith apprentice, we got a carpenter that's served as a finish carpenter and such, we got a laundress, and the second one's a laundress and she's also kitchen help. I'm going to settle the matter in terms you understand: All one money. One money's going to buy all four of them, all four of them. Look 'em over now. Who's going to start the bidding here?

[Bidding begins]

*Auctioneer:* How 'bout five? Who'll give me five, who'll give me five?

[bidding continues]

*Auctioneer:* I got seven and a half, who'll give me seven seventy five?... I got his eight, who'll give me eight and a quarter?

[bidding continues; cries of slaves are heard]

*Auctioneer:* That's all four, one money now... Eight and a quarter...